



## Tokyo Rose and Japanese Anti-American Propaganda

Presented by the Hampton Roads Naval Museum

### **Anti-American Propaganda**

Allied service members operating in the South Pacific during World War II gave the name “Tokyo Rose” to the Japanese woman who broadcast anti-American propaganda across the airwaves. In reality, there was not just one Tokyo Rose, but several women, all of whom could speak English and worked for the Japanese-produced radio program called “The Zero Hour.” The female

broadcasters used multiple aliases and worked from different cities, including Shanghai, Manila, and Tokyo.

### **Tokyo Rose**

The name itself, “Tokyo Rose,” was never actually used by any of the broadcasters. It was a name created by American servicemen, and it stuck throughout the war. The purpose of “The Zero Hour” radio program was to demoralize American servicemen throughout the Pacific Theater. The broadcasters focused on things like the latest U.S. military losses and being so far from home. The radio program’s influence was minimal because most service members tuned in to listen to the current



popular music and break up the regular routine of military life, but did not pay any mind to the anti-American propaganda.

## In 1940s Popular Culture

The popularity of the mythical character “Tokyo Rose” inspired a short, anti-Japanese cartoon produced in 1945. The cartoon, called “Tokyo Woes,” features Seaman Hook retaliating against Tokyo Rose by encouraging Americans to purchase war bonds. The Japanese characters in the cartoon have exaggerated features and speak broken English, showing the anti-Japanese sentiment in the United States during the war. Several of the characters in the cartoon are voiced by Mel Blanc, who was already famous for voicing Bugs Bunny and other famous *Looney Tunes* characters.

